The Virginia Department of
Veterans Services

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News Release

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VA data shows increase in number of Virginia veterans

RICHMOND—Statistics recently released by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) place the number of veterans in Virginia significantly higher than previously reported. According to VetPop2007, the VA's latest official estimate, 807,326 veterans lived in Virginia as of September 30, 2007 – 78,571 more than previously estimated. This moves Virginia from 11th in the nation for the number of veterans living in the state, to eighth in the nation. Nationwide, the VA places the number of veterans at 23.8 million, or two percent higher than previous estimates.

According to the VA, an improved model that uses new data sources and more recent data may account for the changes in the data, both nationally and in Virginia. State officials speculate the increase may be because of a combination of factors: the improved statistical model, a growing number of veterans from the Global War on Terror, and increased life expectancy.

"The bottom line is that we must continue long-term planning to meet the needs of Virginia's veterans," said Vince Burgess, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS). "We must remain committed to serving our veterans."

The agency recently commissioned studies on veterans' needs for long-term care and memorial services. Those studies showed that Virginia needs at least three more care centers and another veterans cemetery. The studies were based on VA statistics that showed the state's veteran population peaking in 2008 and then declining. The new VA model forecasts that the number of Virginia veterans will peak at 823,348 in 2011, and that the decline in the number of veterans in the Commonwealth will be much less drastic than previously estimated. "This new data heightens the urgency for long-range planning," added Burgess

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